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homemakers' chat

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Friday, July 17, 1942.

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SUBJECT: "BROILERS AND FRYERS ★ VICTORY FOOD SPECIAL." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Almost everyone, whether from the North, South, East, or West, likes fried chicken or broiled chicken. So let's have some conversation about this favorite food today.

How long since you had this kind of chicken dinner at your house? Well, whether you've had one lately or not, here's some news that will make you plan another real soon - within the next week or so, in fact. All this has to do with the "Victory Food Special" program. You've probably heard about this program, but just in case you haven't, here's how it works.

Sometimes the markets have an abundance of certain kinds of perishable foods. To help keep these food supplies moving, the Department of Agriculture has started a program calling them "Victory Food Specials," and featuring them in grocery stores all over the country.

From July 16th through the 25th, broilers and fryers are the "Victory Food Special.". Young chickens are plentiful now, because of the greater production of poultry for wartime needs. The surplus cockerels make excellent broilers and fryers. Eating chicken in place of other meat helps the country's food situation. It relieves the demand for meat like pork needed in large quantities for supplying our armed forces and our allies.

Now let's on to the chicken dinner. Let's start with broilers. For a broiled chicken dinner, buy plump chickens weighing about 2 and a half pounds, dressed. You can split these small broilers down the back and cook them whole, either with or without the breastbone. Split larger birds down both the back and breastbone, and use each half for a serving.

Here are the steps to good broiled chicken. First, wash the chicken with water but don't soak in water. Then wipe as dry as you can. Soaking in water means losing both flavor and food value. And another thing--be sure to look the skin over for little pinfeathers. You may find some that were missed before. Use tweezers for the tiny ones if you can't remove them otherwise.

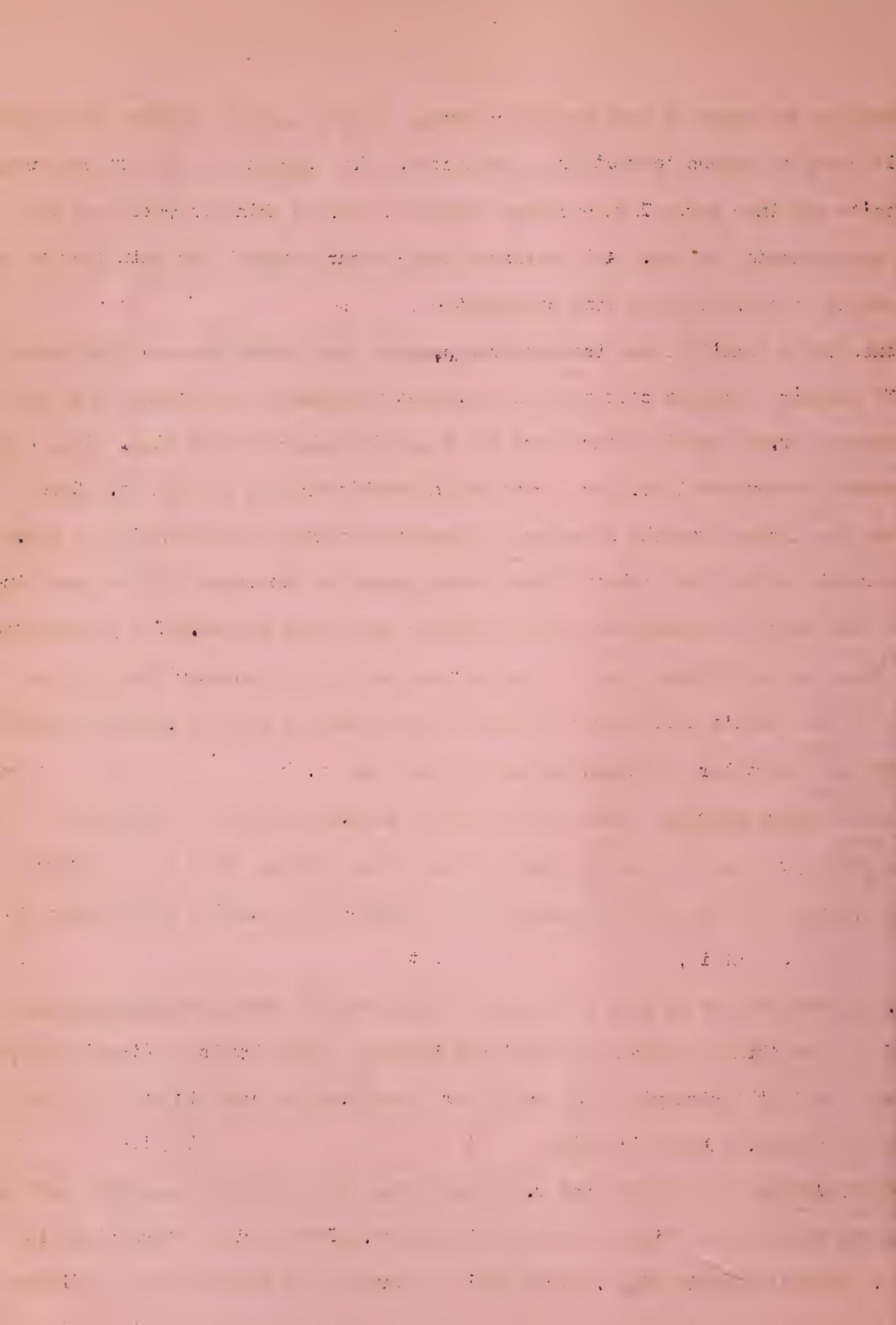
When you're ready to cook the chicken, coat it with melted fat and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sprinkle flour over the buttered surface, if you like. Then put the chicken in your broiler, first with the skin side away from the heat. Keep the bird several inches from the flame or heating element and keep the heat moderate.

Turn the chicken several times as it browns, and baste it often with pan drippings or other melted fat. Let it cook evenly, clear to the bone. If you want to, you can cook the bird partly done in the broiler and finish it slowly in a moderate oven. Then you don't have to give it quite such constant attention. Whether you cook it in the broiler until done or finish it in the oven, be sure to serve the chicken hot, with pan drippings or melted fat poured over it.

Now for fried chicken. When you buy frying chicken, allow at least three-fourths pound or a whole pound for every person to be served. This is in terms of dressed weight, that is, with the head and feet still on and before the chicken is drawn.

The first thing to do when you get a chicken ready to fry is to disjoint it, and cut it into the size pieces you want for serving. Then wash it by just letting water run over it. Again I'd like to put in a word against soaking the good out of chicken by letting it stand in water.

After washing the chicken, pat the pieces dry. Then sprinkle them with salt and pepper, and roll them in flour. Or there's another way to do it. You can dip the pieces in slightly beaten egg, diluted with a tablespoon of water or milk and then roll them in fine, dry bread crumbs, corn meal, or flour.



To fry the chicken, use a thick frying pan. Put in enough fat so when melted it'll be about a half-inch or more deep. The fat should be hot but not smoking when you put in the chicken. Fry the thickest pieces first because they'll take a little longer than the others. Don't crowd the chicken in the pan, and leave enough room around each piece so there's space for the fat to come up around it. Frying spatters a lot of grease, so cover the pan.

Cook the chicken at moderate heat and turn each piece when it's brown. Watch it carefully so none can burn. You'll want to keep the pieces hot after taking them out of the pan. First, lay them on absorbent paper so they can drain, and then put them in a heated pan or crock. You can leave them there without a worry while you put the final touches on the rest of the dinner.

Or, if you have a lot of chicken to fry, you may find it convenient to take the pieces out of the frying pan before they are entirely done and finish cooking them in a moderate oven. This will give you more time for other jobs.

And here's a word about that grease left in the pan when you're through frying the chicken. Don't throw it away. Put it in a can after you've strained out any little pieces of meat or bread crumbs it has taken on while being used. This fat is handy to use for cooking. It's a waste to discard it, especially in these times when nothing of value should be thrown away.

Of course, some of us like gravy with our fried chicken and this takes care of much of this leftover fat. To make good cream gravy, mix 2 tablespoons of flour with 2 tablespoons of drippings in the frying pan. Add gradually 1 and a half cups of cold milk, while stirring constantly. Cook slowly until the gravy is smooth and thickened. Season as you like it.

